

# The Jewish GailyForward

Tevet + Sh'vat + Adar 5769 ■ January + February 2009

## What's Up at Sha'ar Zahav

### Social Justice Community Wide Havdallah

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 6:00 P.M.

#### POTLUCK DINNER

The program will include intergenerational workshops that explore social justice. An interactive Havdallah program closes the evening. Contact Kendra Lubalin, [kendra@shaarzahav.org](mailto:kendra@shaarzahav.org), for more details.

### Tour of Museo ItaloAmericano

SUNDAY, JANUARY 18, 11:00-NOON

Join Dr. Francesco Spagnolo in a special Sha'ar Zahav tour of the Museo ItaloAmericano exhibit: Il Ghetto: Forging Italian Jewish Identities 1516 - 1870 at Fort Mason, Building C. RSVP 415-861-6932. Suggested Donation: \$10 to benefit the Museo and Sha'ar Zahav.

### Music in the Mishkan

SUNDAY, JANUARY 25, 4:00 PM

Join us for "Juon for the Road," the first of three performances, with Randall Weiss on violin, Victoria Ehrlich on cello, and Marilyn Thompson on piano. More info on page 5.

### New Member Welcoming Shabbat

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 8:15 PM

Please join us as we honor those who have joined as members of our

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## The Shul is Alive—with the Sound of Music

If your idea of synagogue sound is the cacophony of tired voices stumbling through lifeless prayers, you haven't been to Congregation Sha'ar Zahav recently! This spring, Sha'ar Zahav sings with an amazing set of musical performances.

First is Music in the Mishkan, celebrating its tenth anniversary with three chamber music concerts highlighting the Jewish composers Paul Juon, Ernest Bloch, and Robert Schumann. Performed by talented musicians, including our own Randy Weiss on violin, these concerts are hot tickets (the concert March 8, cosponsored with the 24th Annual Jewish Music Festival, is sure to sell out!).

In February, we present Cantor Unplugged, a showcase for Sha'ar Zahav's very own Cantor Sharon Bernstein. Cantor Bernstein, who was raised in Israel, is a scholar of Yiddish and Italian Jewish music, and has a deep fondness and appreciation for the liturgical tunes of our cousins to the south, the Jews of Morocco. Her concert will range across time and space, mixing the mournful tunes of Yiddishkeit with the deep beats of Ladino and Mizrahi music and the upbeat tempos of contemporary Israeli sound.

If all these concerts don't fill your music appetite, be sure to mark your calendars now for Purim and Pride, when the Sha'ar Zahav chorus, led by rabbinic intern (and amazing tunester) Reuben Zellman, lead us in song (hilarious song, in the case of Purim). Even better, join them: the chorus is open to anyone who commits to come and sing.

After all, what is unique about Sha'ar Zahav is our participatory services. Not all of us can play the violin like Randy, but we all can sing—yes, you can! When asked about the chorus, Reuben explains, "one of most beautiful aspects of the chorus is that many of our members have not ever sung in public before. They have shared with me that it is a transformative experience. A lot of people think that they can't sing. If the chorus can accomplish one thing, it's to get out the message that any member of the shul can sing with us."

Even if you can't commit to the chorus' schedule, you can still come to shul and sing. When she is on the pulpit, Cantor Bernstein teaches us new *nusach* (liturgical tunes) to familiar prayers. And so do lay leaders—if you haven't heard Adon Olam sung to "I Will Survive," you need to get your tuchus to services!

When asked about her experience at Sha'ar Zahav, Cantor Bernstein says, "leading services here is exhilarating—the walls rebound, vibrate, dance along. There is such a huge breadth and depth of musical possibility: classical, klezmer, hazzanut, camp songs, new compositions by members, and music from all over the Jewish world. This is a community that loves to sing and sing along."

So, nu, what are you waiting for? Join in!



**TWO THOUSAND** years ago, in a world dominated by gladiator games and a callous disregard for human life, the great rabbinic sage, Hillel, uttered these famous words: "*Im Ein Ani Li Mi Li*—If I am not for myself, who am I," "*U'k'sheani l'atzmi, mah ani*—If I am for myself only, what am I."—"V'im lo achshav, eimatai—If not now, when."

In a few weeks time, we will be inaugurating a new president and administration. Anticipation, Hope, Promise, Vision, Authenticity fill the air, the powerful spirit of "Yes, we can!" It's the answer spoken by young and old, rich and poor, Democrat and Republican, black, white, Latino, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, disabled and not disabled—Americans who sent a message to the world that we have never been a collection of Red States and Blue States: we are, and always will be, the United States of America.

Professor Arnold Eisen is the Rosh Yeshiva of the Jewish Theological Seminary, where my Conservative colleagues are trained. As the first dean not to be an ordained rabbi, Professor Eisen understands how politics and Judaism intertwine. He writes that when we unscroll the Torah, "it becomes apparent, from the opening verses onwards, that concern with politics is as old as the Jewish people—and as complex as the rest of Jewish tradition. We cannot look to this or any other text for simple or straightforward answers to contemporary issues. Such answers have never been available. But Torah does provide guidelines that can and should influence our political thinking today as always."

### Pursuing Justice at Sha'ar Zahav

Politics is part of our Jewish life. And it's an important part of life at Sha'ar Zahav. Here, congregants participate in activist political work through the local organizing committee of the San Francisco Organizing Project. We will be focusing on social justice in the upcoming community Havdallah on January 10. And this January, eleven of our teenagers will be traveling with me to Washington D.C. to learn how to lobby politicians. They will be taught by leaders from the Reform Movement's

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Congregation Sha'ar Zahav is a member of the Union for Reform Judaism, the World Congress of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Jews, and the San Francisco Organizing Project



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# Tough Times



**IT'S NOW OFFICIAL** in Washington: we're in a recession, and, while we've been in a recession for over a year, it's likely to continue for a while. "Recession" is a word that brings fear and worry at the same time that our new administration promises change and hope for the future.

We're a community that usually focuses on moving forward. Our leadership retreat is even called "The Advance." But since we're officially "receding"—let's *look back*. After all, as Lisa Katz so eloquently reminded us during our post-Proposition 8 Ma'ariv service, one of the benefits of getting older is the gift of perspective.

As if to underline Lisa's point, Gus Van Sant's tour de force, *Milk*, has been released to wide acclaim—reminding us that hope and disappointment are so often paired, that it takes a community to create lasting change, and that we need each other to keep moving forward.

Sha'ar Zahav is now in our 32nd year. I first started attending services in 1979, just two years after our founding. For our shul, as for the larger gay community, these early days were a time of infinite possibilities and free spirit. *Milk* captured that time. *Of course*, three gay men could create a synagogue, rewrite the liturgy so we were no longer invisible, and decide what Jewish traditions to hold or to build.

But things changed quickly, and in the wrong direction. First we lost Harvey Milk, a gay Jewish man who focused on creating a more inclusive government. And then in the mid-'80s, AIDS began to strike down many more. Yet we did not recede.

Our community found enormous strength and resources. Political issues were set aside and we responded—with emotional support, with spiritual support, with financial and practical support. Our Bikkur Cholim efforts were at their strongest in providing rides, cooking, and sharing medical knowledge. When gay men were barred from blood banks, the women of our congregation organized blood drives for needed transfusions. And we went beyond caring for our

own. We set up monthly brunches for patients, families and caregivers in the AIDS Ward at Kaiser Hospital. Sha'ar Zahav was a model of a caring community at a time when the world felt so inhospitable and uncertain.

We lost so many. The names that we read each year at Yom Kippur reflect those numbers—far too many names for a synagogue that is so young. But those of us who survived grew stronger from those times and more determined to continue building our special and resilient community, our Sha'ar Zahav. For us. For those who died. Sha'ar Zahav survived because we had to. And even more remarkably, we grew from these sad challenges.

And now we're facing a terrible recession—possibly worse than even the elders among us can remember. Individual members will feel the effects most directly—some with serious consequences. Others may be relatively well, immune. Having seen how we organized and supported one another during the early days of AIDS, I have great confidence in our ability to respond to this difficult challenge creatively and lovingly, both as individuals and as a community.

As with the last crisis, our shul will try to anticipate individual members' needs and as a community we will find ways to respond when asked. In January, we are hosting a job search support group. We are particularly mindful of providing healing and inspiration in each of our services. And we are looking to develop more social and learning events at Sha'ar Zahav for little or no cost—to bring us together. We remember that in tough times, the ability to share lifts us all up.

We are also looking for ways to do more with less. Our administrator, Regina Wurst and treasurer, Merle Malakoff, have already found ways to cut operating costs—and together with the Finance Committee and Va'ad, are developing contingency plans to assure we stay within our means.

And we are working to expand our funding base. While the results of our First Annual Chanukah gift auction are not yet known—after all, I'm writing to you, in early December—many of the bids are from

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## Va'ad Members

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# What's Up at Sha'ar Zahav?

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Sha'ar Zahav family in the last year. All are invited for to share in this joyous Shabbat ritual.

## Cantor Unplugged II

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 8:00 PM**

It's back! Cantor Sharon Bernstein and friends with some of her favorite music from across the Jewish (and non-Jewish) spectrum: art songs, musical theater, Yiddish, Israeli, Ladino, and more. Tickets are 10/members, \$15/non-members.

## Meetings: Please Come!

### CSZ-SFOP Organizing Committee Meeting

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 7:00 – 8:30 PM**

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 7:00 – 8:30 PM**

It is one of the central religious obligations in Judaism; pursue justice. One way to do this at Sha'ar Zahav is to join the CSZ San Francisco Organizing Project Committee meeting. Please come discuss how to follow up on our work on Prop 8, and explore other issues such as caring for elders in our community, health care access,

## Jewish Mosaic - Participate in Important Research for LGBT Jews

**Do you identify as LGBT and Jewish? Do you want to share your experiences about LGBT and Jewish issues in the Bay Area? Do you want to provide your input on how to help the Jewish community respond effectively to LGBT people and needs? The results of this study will help Jewish community leaders to better understand and plan for what LGBT Jews want and need. It will also identify successes and barriers in community efforts to engage LGBT Jews.**

**We are looking for a diverse and broad sample of LGBT Jewish people, who are over the age of 18, to participate in either one hour, tape-recorded individual interviews or focus groups about these issues. All individual interviews and focus groups are confidential and will take place at an easily accessible location. To participate, please email [research@jewishmosaic.org](mailto:research@jewishmosaic.org).**

and others that you may want to suggest! All are welcome to attend. For more information, please contact Sarita Grotisser at [saritag1@aol.com](mailto:saritag1@aol.com)

### Welcoming Committee Meeting

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 7:00 - 9:00 PM**

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 7:00 – 9:00 PM**

All are invited to join this vibrant, revitalized group as we work to make Sha'ar Zahav the most welcoming environment, to both new and longstanding members. Have an idea that you want to contribute? Simply want to build community amongst fantastic people? Come! Please contact Jim Acerra, [jacerra@msn.com](mailto:jacerra@msn.com), or Marty Rawlings-Fein, [marty@ftmsf.org](mailto:marty@ftmsf.org) for more details.

### Looking for a job? Don't do it alone!

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 7:30 PM**

Finding a new job is never an easy process, and in today's economic climate, it may seem even more daunting. One way to make the work a little easier is to do it with other people. Come to our first meeting. More info on page 9. Please RSVP to [Greg@shaarzahav.org](mailto:Greg@shaarzahav.org).

## Classes

### Rabbi's Shabbat Morning Class

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 31, 10:00 - 11:30 AM**

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 10:00 - 11:30 AM**  
Join Rabbi Angel to study and discuss critical and current topics in the Jewish and LGBTQ communities. All are welcome.

### Tzedek, Tzedek Tirdof! Justice, Justice Shall You Pursue: Rabbinic Ideas of a Just Society

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 7:00 – 9:00 PM**

For the rabbis of the Mishna and Talmud, tikkun olam—"establishing the world rightly"—was something that had to be incorporated into the very structure and fabric of Jewish society, into social, economic, and legal relationships. In this course, we will explore together some texts from Midrash, Mishna, Talmud and Maimonides' Code that deal with the just ordering of society in general and in specifics. Taught by Rabbi Camille Shira Angel

## Music in the Mishkan

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 25, 4:00 PM**

Music in the Mishkan, Sha'ar Zahav's chamber music concert series, celebrates its Tenth Anniversary! On January 25, join us for "Juon for the Road," the first of three performances, with Randall Weiss on violin, Victoria Ehrlich on cello, and Marilyn Thompson on piano. They will perform *Four Miniatures* (Paul Juon), *Piano Trio* (Anton Arensky), and *Piano Trio in D Minor* (Felix Mendelssohn).

The following concerts will take place on Sunday, March 8 (featuring music by Ernest Bloch) and Sunday, May 3 (featuring the music of Robert Schumann), all at 4:00 pm. Tickets are \$15/20 per performance or \$40/55 for the series (Member/General Public). Advanced purchases encouraged. Call 415-861-6932 to charge or visit [www.shaarzahav.org](http://www.shaarzahav.org) to download an order form.

# •Reflections on my First Year at Sha'ar Zahav



I'M TEMPTED to write this as a funny piece. This is, after all, the first congregation I've worked with that truly appreciates (or at least tolerates) my pavlovian need to pun.

But that would sell it short. And I don't want to sell anything short about serving as the cantor of this amazing congregation.

It is a rare experience I'm having here. The community is so open, passionate, genuinely caring, challenging in all the right ways, fun, exciting, inspiring. People ask good questions and want to hear real answers. There is a profound sense of the possible, a belief that worlds can open, wounds can heal, ideas can be born. I often see or hear something that stops me short: something kind or sweet or meaningful, an act of enormous generosity, some all-too-rare-in-this-world moment of openness and vulnerability.

I thought I would get used to it. I haven't yet. Hope I don't.

The year has been filled with a wealth of experiences: mentoring—and being mentored by—service leaders, making music with the plethora of outstanding musicians in our community, pre-marital counseling with couples who have worked at their love for decades, extraordinary prayer moments and co-leading experiences, time with our thoroughly inspiring B'nei Mitzvah and young folks in the Beit Sefer, translating Hebrew poetry and poring through song possibilities for the new siddur, Chanukah, Shabbat Shira, Purim, Pesach, Pride, Tisha B'Av, SFOP, Ritcom, High Holy Days, working with beyond admirable fellow staff and lay leaders... as I reflect on the year, it is impossible to select particular highlights—it feels like one big highlight, everything special, memorable, nothing more so than another.

I'm starting now my round of "second"s, and it's seeming so far that it will be as with the Interfaith Thanksgiving

## Politics and Judaism

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delegates, which I believe is a function of our national recognition through CBCO - a congregation-based community organizing, i.e. our SFOP work. The responsibility entails helping to set the priorities for our movement's social justice work I hope that my service will bring honor and pride to our community.

Together let us continue to stand up, each in our own way, but together, supporting one another in our commitment to social justice. In this way we will truly create meaningful and lasting change.

Service—even richer the second time around, the knowledge and experience from the previous year lending towards more vibrant pictures and ideas of what can be. I have many goals for this year, but the overarching theme is to work as individuals and as a community to stretch our spirits—through music, through text, through learning, through prayer. To explore our souls, play with our creative juices, discover and re-discover what gets us going.

In that, I hope you will be my cohorts. Lend me your visions. Let me know what works for you... and what doesn't. Strive together to grapple with the angels, sing our metaphors, branch our tree of life.

And together enjoy the particular fabulousness of this particularly wonderful community.

# Cantor Unplugged II

**SATURDAY,  
FEBRUARY 21, 8:00 PM**

It's back! Cantor Sharon Bernstein and friends with some of her favorite music from across the Jewish (and non-Jewish) spectrum: art songs, musical theater, Yiddish, Israeli, Ladino, and more. Tickets are \$10/members, \$15/non-members.

# Becoming B'nei Mitzvah



THESE past few months at Beit Sefer and in our community have been full of highs and lows. I feel proud that we have rallied as a community and as a school to address the more difficult aspects of the election and to celebrate the successes. Through all the world events, we have continued on our path at Beit Sefer to build community and sustain Jewish learning.

One of the high points of the year has been the many Bnei Mitzvahs that we have celebrated this year. Each time we have a Bnei Mitzvah, I am impressed by the uniqueness of our community and our ability to instill the love of Jewish learning in our youth. The CEB (Child Education Board), myself and the clergy have spent the last year refining our Bnei Mitzvah program so that the experience is user-friendly and meaningful for the whole family.

We have completed a new Bnei Mitzvah guide that will be sent to all the families. This is a useful guide for those that are going through the Bnei Mitzvah process. It also offers a wealth of information for those who will go through the process in the future.

One of the most important features of our Bnei Mitzvah process is the mentor program. The mentor will begin working with your child eighteen months before the date of their Bnei Mitzvah and is a combination of a coach, friend and tutor. I hear over and over again that this process is so valuable for both the mentor and the mentee. We are always on the lookout for new mentors, so if you are interested, please contact me so we can discuss what is involved. It is never too soon to think about who the appropriate mentor is for your child, so if you have a community member in mind, don't hesitate to ask them. If you find a mentor, please keep me and Ilana Bernstein in the loop.

There are many important skills that a student receives through going through the Bnei Mitzvah process. They learn how to service lead, they learn

trope and how to leyn from the Torah, and they write a drash that interprets their Torah portion and draws from their life experience. All of these mitzvot are important to the Bnei Mitzvah process. However, becoming a member of the community is an equally important component of the process. We do not view the Bnei Mitzvah as an end to a Jewish education but as an opportunity for youth to get more deeply involved in synagogue life.

There are a myriad of ways that teens can increase their involvement post-Bnei Mitzvah. They can service lead on Shabbat or the High Holidays (and they are required to do this at least once), they can take classes through Beit Sefer or Adult Education, they can join a committee, join the Galei Limudim (adults who prepare special classes for students), or become a madrich (assistant in Hebrew classes). We have developed a Bnei Mitzvah program that focuses so much on community involvement because we want our students to both step up to the bimah but also step up to becoming active members of our community.

I look forward to sharing the simcha of our upcoming Bnei Mitzvahs!!!

See you at Beit Sefer!!

B'Shalom,  
Rebecca

## CALENDAR

### FAMILY

#### FIRST FRIDAY

**Friday Night Live—A Family Shabbat Service**

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 2, 6:00 - 7:00 PM**

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 6:00 - 7:00 PM**  
Calling all Kids! Bring yourselves and your favorite grown-ups to celebrate Shabbat with us. We invite you to stay after for dinner. We will provide pizza, but we encourage you to bring a vegetarian dish to share. If you wish to sponsor a future FNL dinner, please contact the synagogue office, 415-861-6932. Designed for children 0 to 6 years, but all are welcome as Isaac Zones and Daniel Meyer-O'Keeffe lead us on a dancing, singing, stomping, laughing Shabbat time.

#### Second Friday

**East Bay Chavurah**

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 9, 6:00-9:00 PM;**

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 6:00-9:00 PM**  
We invite your entire family and your friends (non-members warmly welcomed) to CSZ's East Bay Chavurah. Our evening begins with a vegetarian/vegan potluck as we share blessings and check in, while singing, eating, and enjoying each other's company. At

## BEIT SEFER DATES TO REMEMBER

### JANUARY 3

Shabbat Class

### JANUARY 7

Wednesday Class

### JANUARY 10

No Shabbat Class

Community Wide Havdallah

### JANUARY 14

Wednesday Class

### JANUARY 17

No Shabbat Class

MLK Holiday

### JANUARY 21

Wednesday Class

### JANUARY 24

Shabbat Class—Tot

### JANUARY 28

Wednesday Class

### JANUARY 31

Shabbat Class

### FEBRUARY 4

Wednesday Class

### FEBRUARY 11

Wednesday Class—

### FEBRUARY 16

No Shabbat Class  
Presidents Weekend

### FEBRUARY 7

Shabbat Class—Vera

Williamson-Bat Mitzvah

### FEBRUARY 9

Tu'B'Shevat

### FEBRUARY 11

Wednesday Class—

### FEBRUARY 18

Wednesday Class—

### FEBRUARY 21

Shabbat Class—Tot

### FEBRUARY 25

Wednesday Class

### FEBRUARY 28

Shabbat Class

## B'nei Mitzvah



Vera Williamson will become a Bat Mitzvah on February 7, 2009. Vera attends Lipman Middle School in Brisbane as a 7th grader.

Vera is passionate about sports. She plays soccer, futsol (two teams this coming winter), basketball and softball with her Brisbane friends whom she has

known for a long time. She also likes math and science. In her spare time, she likes to play the drums which she has been playing for almost four years. For her Bat Mitzvah project, Vera chose to raise funds for an organization called Cats in Crisis.

Vera is being mentored by Deborah Levy who is also helping her with her drash. To further help with her preparations, Vera has assembled a bimah at

her home and has led Friday night services for her family. Since Vera has no way to get to Wednesday Hebrew school, she is being tutored by Ila Cherny who visits every week.

One of the great strengths of CSZ is that it allows congregants to assume the role of service leaders on the bimah. Vera has had supportive co-leaders in the two services she has been in so far, and is looking forward to her Bat Mitzvah.

around 7:30, adults (and teens) are invited to continue our Shabbat experience with some meaningful text-based Jewish dialogue. We invite parents of young children to take advantage of our childcare during this time. To RSVP or host a future event, please contact Richard Weiner, 510.531.7660, or Sue Bojdak, 510.530.9955.

### Social Justice Community

#### Wide Havdallah

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 6:00 P.M.**

#### POTLUCK DINNER

The program will include intergenerational workshops that explore social justice. An interactive Havdallah program closes the evening. This program takes the place of regular Shabbat classes. Beit Sefer students are expected to attend. Contact Kendra Lubalin, [kendra@shaarzahav.org](mailto:kendra@shaarzahav.org), for more details.

#### Third Friday Shabbat Ruach

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 6:00-7:15 PM**

The monthly Kabbalat Shabbat Program, which meets every third Friday, is a rocking ruach(spirit)-filled Shabbat service led by former Camp Tawonga Director, Deborah Newbrun and Isaac Zones of Friday Night Live fame. Join us for a pizza dinner at 6:00 pm, followed by services from 6:30 - 7:15 pm. Family and class participation will be a staple of this service and each

week there will be drash performed by a different class. Let the ruach begin!!!!

#### Tot Shabbat

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 24, 10:30**

**AM; SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21,  
10:30 AM**

Families with tots come to-

gether monthly for a program that includes prayer, challah baking, arts & crafts, music & movement, and storytelling. Tot Shabbat is a wonderful opportunity to build community with a diverse group of Jewish families. Tot Shabbat is open to both members and the general public.



## Andréa D. Guerra Photography

B'nei Mitzvahs, Weddings, Civil Ceremonies,  
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## Tough Times

(continued from page 3)

non-Sha'ar Zahav members. Several people have also ordered our new Siddur. Thanks to a few very generous donors, all of the proceeds from Siddur sales and book plates go right to our bottom line. And, we have also been steadily adding new members and their families and will continue to focus on welcoming all those who value our engaging and innovative community. Our membership numbers are now, in fact, higher than at any other time in our history.

We also need *your help* to keep our shul strong. We have always asked members to provide financial support to the best of their abilities. Especially in these challenging times, we hope you will support Sha'ar Zahav as you are most able—not just with regard to dues, but with additional support during our annual Rainbow Campaign which will begin in February. The funds raised during this appeal are crucial to covering our annual budget. We know that this year, some of you will have to give less because of your own financial challenges. We still honor and appre-

ciate your participation and efforts and the many other rich ways you can and do give. As in the '80s, we hope that those of you who are relatively immune to the severity of the economic downturn can and will provide increased financial support.

There is so much to love and hope for in our future. Last night, I attended a Friday Night Live service which at one point featured 26 tots with arms in the air, spinning like dreidels. The Kabbalat Shabbat service which followed was attended by several new people who have only recently moved to San Francisco and are eager to join our shul. This morning, a bat mitzvah service co-led by Reuben Zellman, our Rabbinic Intern, and Howard Steiermann featured a drash by an exquisitely talented young woman, Lisa Windesheim-Zigas, who found and sometimes sang contemporary lyrics to teach us the truths of her torah portion.

In January, Randy Weiss will be welcoming us to the 10th anniversary of our Music in the Mishkan series. And in February, Cantor Bernstein will recreate her magical, "Cantor Unplugged" evening. Meanwhile, the

Adult Education committee continues to expand classes and our local SFOP group continues to build our special brand of Tikkun Olam. And although there's a little problem with civil weddings for the moment, all those other life cycle events keep happening.

Toward the end of today's bat mitzvah service, Rabbi Angel led us all in singing very gently a few lines of John Lennon's "Imagine ...." I, for one, am committed to continuing to imagine and strengthen our Sha'ar Zahav community. As individuals and as a community, we face tough economic challenges. This too we shall survive—because we have to. Many people have contributed to bring us to where we are—and our children and generations to come need what we have created. Leadership is going to carefully manage the economic balance, but it will take our combined efforts: to provide support for each other in meeting individual challenges—and in providing the necessary resources for Sha'ar Zahav to continue as a supporting community. Thank you to each of you for doing all that you can do.



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# Beit Warszawa: Our New Sibling Congregation

By Barbara Cymrot and Karen Schiller

**B**efore leaving on the Sha'ar Zahav trip to Eastern Europe last April, our group had talked about our feelings about going to Poland. Poland was a graveyard, as far as we were concerned, the place where three million Jews died, a place with a long—and continuing—history of anti-Semitism. We were there to mourn our dead.

Instead, we discovered Beit Warszawa Jewish Cultural Association, where a living, thriving progressive Jewish community is celebrated and supported. On our first night in Poland, we were greeted with open arms by Rabbi Burt Schuman and over twenty members of this vibrant community.

The mission of Beit Warszawa Jewish Cultural Association, founded in 1999, is to bring back to life the tradition of Progressive Judaism present in Poland before World War II. It is the only organization in Poland created specifically for the purpose of bringing liberal-minded people to Judaism.

Over and over again, we heard from people who had not been raised Jewish, but who had found out that they were in-

deed Jewish. Now they wanted to live as Jews and Beit Warszawa was making this possible.

A bright spot at Sha'ar Zahav's service commemorating Kristallnacht (the organized anti-Jewish riots in Germany and Austria, November 9-10, 1938) was when Rabbi Angel announced the beginning of a sibling relationship between Beit Warszawa and Sha'ar Zahav. This is an opportunity for all of us to ensure that Poland remains a home for a dynamic, growing Jewish community where the voice of progressive Judaism is heard.

Participants at the Kristallnacht service suggested ways we can support Beit Warszawa. Besides contributing money, ideas included donating our old siddurim, sending them copies of our new siddur, facilitating exchanges between their members and ours, and inviting Rabbi Schuman to be our scholar-in-residence. Watch the JGF and weekly emails for further information about ways to be engaged with Beit Warszawa, our new sibling congregation.

In the meantime, if you would like to send money, send your donation to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund, marked for Beit Warszawa.

Beit Warszawa's website: [www.beit.org.pl](http://www.beit.org.pl)



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"From a good moment".  
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in gratitude, appreciation and thankfulness to the CSZ staff.

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in memory of Larry Tannenbaum.

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in memory of Herma Krell.

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**Lee Pollak** in honor of Martin Tannenbaum & Alex Ingersoll's marriage.

### Ora Prochovnick & Rena Frantz

in memory of Norman Katz.  
in memory of Larry Tannenbaum.  
in memory of Terry Frazin.

**Barbara Rinkoff & Ellen Murland** in memory of Barbara's aunt, Elaine Lewis.

**Gerald Rosenstein** in memory of Larry Tannenbaum.

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in memory of Norman Katz.

**Susan Stevenson & Joyce Norcini** in memory of Norman Katz.

**Sam Thal** in memory of

Larry Tannenbaum.  
in honor of Alex & Martin.

### Judith Wolfe & Jennifer Hughes

in appreciation of Rabbi Angel's advice and counsel regarding their marriage.  
with love and deep appreciation for Susan Schwartz for performing their wedding and making it so special.  
in honor of the marriage of Alex Ingersoll & Martin Tannenbaum.

**Judith Wolfe** in appreciation of the Cantor and all of the leaders at High Holiday services.

### Gay Young & Daniel Schindler

in honor of the marriage of Alex Ingersoll & Martin Tannenbaum and their commitment to Judaism.

**Michael Zimmerman** in memory of Norman Katz.

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**Alex Ingersoll and Martin Tannenbaum**—Stained Glass Window Art

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**Deborah Levy** in honor of Alex & Martin's love and marriage.

**Barbara Wezelman** in honor of the staff who arranged a Kol Nidre ticket for her cousin.

## High Holiday Donation Pledges

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**Emanuel Anes**

**Anonymous (1)**

**Anonymous (2)**

**Jessie Ap'neva & Nina Wouk**

**Dan Bellm**

**Ruthy Bennett**

**Larry Best** in honor of our amazing Cantor, Sharon Bernstein.

**Elliott Block**

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participated in making the High  
Holiday services so special.  
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**Debra Wilensky** in memory of her  
mother, Sabina Wilensky (Shima bat  
Chira).  
**Sharon Wilensky**  
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**Judith Wolfe**  
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**Batya Kalis** For donating a shelf of books  
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in honor of the marriage of Matt  
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### Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

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Angel's wonderful presence and leader-  
ship in connection with Proposition 8.  
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in honor of Alex & Martin's wedding.

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Beit Warszawa.

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wedding of Neil Hart & David  
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**Lisa Inman & Alisa Gilden** in honor of  
Rabbi Angel for officiating their 3rd  
wedding & their 1st baby naming.

**Ellen Klutznick** in honor of Deborah Levy.

**Ora Prochovnick & Rena Frantz**  
in appreciation of Rabbi Angel's  
officiating of their civil ceremony.

**Barbara Rinkoff & Ellen Murland**  
in honor of Rabbi Angel on the  
occasion of their wedding.

**Jonathan Strober & William David Holt**  
**Fred & Irene Tannenbaum** For Rabbi  
Angel's extraordinary compassion and  
support at the time of our loss.

**Michael Tyler & Amy Schustack**  
in memory of Herma Moser.  
in memory of Larry Tannenbaum.

**Larry Wexler** in support of Beit Warszawa.

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in memory of Larry Tannenbaum.

### Rainbow Fund

**Bernard Choden & Lois Scott** in memory  
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### Social Action Fund

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## October 2008

3/4

Friday Night Live Dinner Generously Sponsored by **Sharon Dulberg & Ilana Drummond**

Bimah Flowers & Friday Oneg Generously Sponsored by **Joan Goldman** *In memory of her father, Al Goldman, on his yahrzeit.*

10/11

Oneg Generously Sponsored by **Alisa Gilden & Lisa Inman** *In honor of their civil ceremony.*

24/25

Bimah Flowers Generously Sponsored by **The Ross Trupin Family** *In honor of the Bat Mitzvah of Maia Ross Trupin.*

Friday Oneg Generously Sponsored by **Michael Bettinger & Robert Goldstein** *In celebration of the 21st anniversary of their kiddushin.*

Saturday Kiddush Generously Sponsored by **Edie & Stan Ross and Adele & Jerome Trupin** *In honor of the Bat Mitzvah of Maia Ross Trupin.*

31/ November 1

Friday Oneg Generously Sponsored by **Richard Meyerson** *In honor of our right and obligation to vote on Tuesday [Nov. 4, 2008], and our ability to defeat Proposition 8.*

Saturday Kiddush Generously Sponsored by **Alisa Gilden & Lisa Inman** *In honor of the Hebrew naming of Shaya Inman-Gilden.*

**November**

7/8

Friday Night Live Dinner Generously Sponsored by **Bevan Duffy**

Bimah Flowers Generously Sponsored by **Sybil Meyer** *In memory of her mother, Margot Bernstein.*

21/22

Bimah Flowers, Friday Oneg and Saturday Kiddush Generously Provided/Sponsored by **The Ryan-Levine Family** *In honor of the Bar Mitzvah of Samuel Ryan.*

## New Members

We warmly welcome the following new member to Congregation Sha'ar Zahav

**Deborah Holley; the Landis Von Jones Family: Kimmy Landis, Torino Von Jones, and their children Golden and Sage Landis Von Jones; Cara Goldfader; Richard Mikles; Dana Stoloff; Jonathan Goldberg and Brady Dewar; Rebekah Evans and Jodie Cavinder; Jonathan Strober and William Holt; Ed Leddy; and Jessica Nall, Jonathan Frommer, and David Mizne.**

We also welcome back with open arms returning members **Bobbie Rosenthal, G'dali Braverman, and Leslie Einhorn** - but this time she returns with her partner **Jen Gandy** and their one year old daughter **Georgia**.

## Births

Mazel Tov to **Ilana Drummond** and **Sharon Dulberg** on the birth of their daughter, **Ella Rose Drummond-Dulberg**, who was born on October 21. Also, Mazel Tov to **Micha Drummond-Dulberg**, who now has a baby sister!

Mazel Tov to our former program director, **Rabbi Renee Bauer** and her spouse, **Rabbi Laurie Zimmerman**. They are the now the proud parents of **Eliana Idit Zimbauer**, who was born on October 20.

Mazel Tov to **Sarah and Adam Orman**. They are now the proud parents of **Sander Elliott Orman**, born on Monday, November 10 at 4:34 am, weighing 7 lbs, 11 ozs.

Mazel Tov to **G'dali Braverman**, who is now the proud father of twins, **Ari and Ella Braverman**, who were born on November 19.

## Namings

Mazel Tov to **Lisa Inman** and **Alisa Gilden** on their daughter, **Shaya Inman Gilden**, receiving the Hebrew Name **Chaya** in a lovely ceremony here at Sha'ar Zahav on Saturday, November 1.

## B'nei Mitzvah

Mazel Tov to **Maia Ross Trupin** on becoming a Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, October 25.

Mazel Tov to **Sam Ryan**, who rose to the bima as a Bar Mitzvah Saturday, November 22.

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## Weddings

Mazel tov to **Judith Wolfe and Jenny Hughes**, who were married on September 29, in their San Francisco home in a lovely, moving ceremony conducted by their dear friend (and Sha'ar Zahav member) **Susan Schwartz**, who was deputized for this very special occasion.

Their closest friends participated and were witnesses to this joyful event.

Mazel tov to **Ora Prochovnick and Rena Frantz** who were married on September 21 with a small ceremony in their backyard, with friends and family in attendance and their two kids, **Tsipora** and **Shayna**, serving as witnesses. Ora and Rena have been married in the eyes of their friends, family, and religious community for 25 wonderful years.

Mazel Tov to **Lisa Inman and Alisa Gilden**, who got married by Rabbi Angel at Sha'ar Zahav on Friday, October 10.

Mazel Tov to **Barbara Rinkoff and Ellen Murland**, who got married in a lovely ceremony at Point Reyes on Monday, October 13.

Mazel Tov to **Daniel McGoldrick and David Lowe**, who were married on October 24 at Teatro ZinZanni.

Mazel Tov to **Ellen Novogrodsky and Stephanie Godt**, who got married October 28, at City Hall SF. **Tom Ammiano** was their fabulous (and funny) officiant. Their daughter **Chava** was their flower girl, and their son **Aidan** was their ring bearer and one of their witnesses! They had a beautiful ceremony surrounded by their extended family and friends.

Mazel Tov to **Neil Hart and David Wasserman**, who got married by **Rabbi Angel** in a beautifully moving ceremony in their back yard on Sunday, November 2.

Mazel Tov to **Janet Klein and Lisa Di-Girolamo**, who were married on Sunday, November 2 in the arboretum.

Mazel Tov to **Ryan Buchholz Mandel** and **Billie Mandel**, who had their civil wedding on Thursday, October 30.

Mazel Tov to **Arthur Slepian and Gerry Llamado**, who were married in a lovely civil wedding ceremony by **Reuben Zellman** on Sunday, October 26.

Mazel Tov to **Nina Wouk and Jessie Ap'neva**, who renewed their vows with a

civil wedding on September 14.

Mazel Tov to **Jonathan Strober** and **William Holt**, who were married in a lovely ceremony on October 30 by Rabbi Angel here at Sha'ar Zahav.

## Naches

Congratulations to **Andrew Ramer** who, on September 21, became a father through the adult adoption of David-Michael Searcy-Ramer.

Mazel tov to the Gandy-Einhorn family. On October 20, **Georgia Rose Gandy-Einhorn**, daughter of new members **Jen Gandy** and **Leslie Einhorn**, is now one year old!

Yashir koach to **Dennis Ybarra** on the recent publication of *The Trouble with Textbooks: Distorting History and Religion*.

Yashir koach to **Lienna Vayzman**, who curated the art show *Chance Operations*, which ran Saturday, October 26 at the Climate Theater.

Yashir koach to **Ora Prochovnick**, who recently received the Community Ally Award from the Transgender Law Center.

Yashir koach to **Anne Bluethenthal**, who co-choreographed *Dancing the Dead/Dharma*, which was performed on Saturday, November 1 at the Dance Mission Theater.

Thank you to all 43 Sha'ar Zahav members who showed up on Thursday, October 23 to participate in phonebank-

ing for No on 8: **Eve Meyer, Sophie Macks, Judy Macks, Drew Parker-Rose, Flavio Epstein, Ora Prochovnick, Dana Vinicoff, Ruth Miguel, Leslie Miessner, Marci De Leon, Lydia Zinn, Elaine Weissman, Stacey Schuster, Joan Lefkowitz, Mara Schuster-Lefkowitz, Michael Sarid, Ellen Press, Nancy Levin, Joan Goldman, Nancy Levin, Mark Freeman, Deborah Levy, Daniel Ostrow, Susan Lubeck, Scott Kramer, Tsipora Prochovnick, Kevin Stein, Kathleen and Ernest Friedlander, Julia Weber, Erika Katske, Aaron Danzig, Amy Cunningham, Andy Schwartz, Gary Winter, James Moser, Nancy Kates, Sara Haber, Noam Szkoke, James Carlson, and Reuben Zellman.**

Yashir koach to **Rabbi Camille Angel**, who received SFOP's "Who Do You Love" Award for embodying the organizing principal: *Challenge Deepens Relationship* in the struggle for marriage equality, Fall 2008.

Yashir koach to **Jenni Olson** on the completion of her new film, *575 Castro St.*

Yashir koach to **Marty Rawlings-Fein** who received UCSF's Dept. of Psych SuperStar Award for outstanding accomplishment/excellent service in the third quarter of 2008.

# Tu b'Shevat: God in the Context, God in the Consequences

## By Nina Wouk

### for the Ritual Committee

**G**od's time is not like mortal time. God moves faster than we do, in sub-microscopic nanosecond interactions, and slower, in eons-long evolutions. Our acts emerge from contexts of which we can know but little, and lead to consequences beyond our imagining. Yet awareness of context and consequence can help us in choosing how to act. This awareness comes hard. It means learning, during our little slices of life, to attune our urgent fears and eager desires to the cycles the encompass us.

Tu b'Shevat, the birthday of trees, exists because fruit trees grow at their own

rates. After planting a tree we have wait until it is strong enough to bear being harvested. Human effort can encourage or thwart growth, but cannot force it.

Equally, once a historical process is set in motion, its working out escapes human planning. Isaiah wrote in the name of God, promising political restoration:

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For just as the rain and snow descend from heaven and will not return there, rather it waters the earth and causes it to produce and sprout, and gives seed to the sower and food to the eater, so shall be My word... until it will have accomplished what I desired and brought success where I sent it.

Isaiah found God present in both the unseen, uncontrollable forces behind the natural world and the equally mysterious political struggles of his own day.

The earliest stories of the Bible reflect the need to live in both our own time and God's, and the tension between those needs. When Abraham, in his old age, sought to provide a wife for his only remaining son, he made his servant swear not to let Isaac marry a Canaanite woman. This is puzzling. God had promised Abraham descendants, and had promised that those descendants would inherit the land of Canaan where he lived as a landless stranger. What better way to bring this about than to marry his heir to the daughter of a local land-owner?

Yet Abraham rejected this easy solution. Over the course of his long life, he had seen enough of God's timing to know that it eludes our mortal impatience. God's promises emerged mysteriously and then lingered unfulfilled. Abraham and Sarah tried to force events

by letting Hagar become Abraham's second wife, but her son was not the one God intended to inherit the family burden and blessing. The easy-seeming solution brought complications, leaving God's solution still unknown.

When Isaac was finally born, God waited a few years and demanded him back. Abraham had learned by then to wait and see what God meant. He undertook an act that seemed to be no solution at all, rather an undoing of all God had given. He must have been sure that God's promise would not return empty, that the unthinkable command was part of a larger context, an act with unknowable consequences. He could glimpse and further those consequences only by being ready to kill his son. When the time finally came to find a wife for Isaac, Abraham knew that God's ways can be discovered only waiting for the unfolding of time.

We are not faced with incomprehensible commands to kill our children, although we risk them in wars, declared and undeclared. But we, like Abraham and Isaiah, live in chaotic times, and like all mortals we live only on the breaking edge of the present, depending on limited insight into both past and future. We often feel a great urgency in the work of *tikkun olam*, which our faith demands of us both in the pursuit of justice and in the mitzvah of self-defense. Ultimately the fruition of our efforts is no more up to us than is the fruition of a tree.

The kabbalists of Sefat must have understood this, when they designed the Tu b'Shevat seder to encompass all natural and historical evolutions, on all levels of experience. Whether we celebrate with a seder or not, Tu b'Shevat is a good occasion to contemplate the roots of the present and the ways our present may branch into the future.

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# Condolences

We extend heartfelt condolences to the following CSZ members on the death of their loved ones:

**James Moser**, on the death of his aunt, Herma Krell

**Frank Yellin**, on the death of his uncle, Harry Yellin

**Lisa DiGirolamo** and **Asa and Finch**

**DiGirolamo Klein**, on the death of Lisa's grandmother, Maria Kanuaka

**Rebecca Kramer**, on the death of her cousin, Eugene Weinstein

**Kevin Johnson**, on the death of his friend, Barbara Sussman

**Martin Tannenbaum**, on the death of his brother, Larry Tannenbaum

# Member Yahrzeits

## January

- 9 Jerome Davis
- 12 Phyllis Mintzer
- 18 Keith Fenton
- 20 George Ash
- 27 Bill Ashley-Dobbin
- 28 Sol Weinstein

## February

- 1 Steven Richter
- 2 Cheryl Orvis
- 2 Stephen Walters
- 4 John Atteridge
- 6 Ronald Wilmot
- 9 Nathan Eli Weinstein
- 14 Barbara Rosenblum
- 15 Allan Ellis
- 17 Rabbi Jason Gaber
- 17 Ziggy Gimnicher
- 23 Leland Vogel

In Memory

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## Please Be in Touch With Me

I am eager to be in touch with all members of the CSZ family whenever there are occasions of joy or sadness in your lives.

Where there is a death in the family, please call me as soon as possible. We very much want to be there with you at a time of grief.

**Rabbi Camille Shira Angel**

*Earnings Devoted to Philanthropy*

## SINAI MEMORIAL CHAPEL CHEVRA KADISHA

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FD 262

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FD 1523

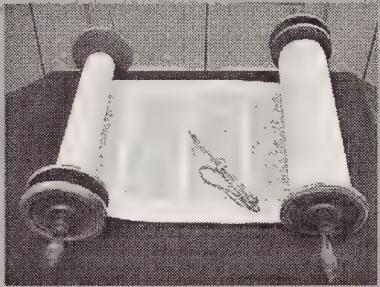
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*Gene B. Kaufman, Executive Director  
Helen Schwartz, Pre-need Counselor*

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## Congregation Sha'ar Zahav

290 Dolores Street  
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FAX 415-861-6081

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# Sha'ar Zahav

## Tevet-Sh'vat 5769

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

JANUARY 2009

**5 TEVET**  
6:30 pm Ma'ariv service  
Office Closed  
New Year's Day

**7 TEVET**  
6:00 pm Friday Night Live  
8:15 pm Shabbat Service

**9 TEVET**  
9:00 am Torah Study  
10:15 am Shabbat Service

**8 TEVET**  
6:30 pm Ma'ariv service

**10 TEVET**  
6:30 pm Ma'ariv service

**12 TEVET**

6:30 pm Ma'ariv service  
7:00 pm Welcoming Committee

**13 TEVET**

7:30 pm Shabbat Service

**14 TEVET**  
9:00 am Torah Study  
10:15 am Shabbat Service  
5:30 pm Community Wide Havdalah

**4**

**5**

**6**

**7**

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**10**

**15 TEVET**  
6:30 pm Ma'ariv service

**16 TEVET**  
6:30 pm Ma'ariv service

**17 TEVET**  
6:30 pm Ma'ariv service

**18 TEVET**  
6:30 pm Ma'ariv service

**19 TEVET**

6:30 pm Ma'ariv service  
6:45 pm Va'ad Meeting

**20 TEVET**

7:30 pm Shabbat Service

**21 TEVET**  
9:00 am Torah Study  
10:15 am Shabbat Service

**22 TEVET**  
6:30 pm Ma'ariv service

**23 TEVET**

MLK Jr Day

Office Closed

**24 TEVET**  
6:30 pm Ma'ariv service

**25 TEVET**

6:30 pm Ma'ariv service

**26 TEVET**  
6:30 pm Ma'ariv service

**27 TEVET**

7:30 pm Shabbat Service

**28 TEVET**  
9:00 am Torah Study  
10:15 am Shabbat Service  
10:30 am Tot Shabbat

**29 TEVET**  
4:00 pm Music in the

Mishkan

**1 SH'VAT**  
6:30 pm Ma'ariv service

**2 SH'VAT**  
6:30 pm Ma'ariv service

**3 SH'VAT**  
6:30 pm Ma'ariv service

**4 SH'VAT**  
6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service  
6:30 pm Ritual Committee

**5 SH'VAT**  
7:30 pm Shabbat Service

**6 SH'VAT**  
9:00 am Torah Study  
10:15 am Shabbat Service

**25**

**26**

**27**

**28**

**29**

**30**

**31**

# Sha'ar Zahav

# FEBRUARY 2009

## SATURDAY

### FRIDAY

### THURSDAY

### WEDNESDAY

### TUESDAY

### MONDAY

**7 SH'VAT**  
6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service

**8 SH'VAT**  
6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service

**9 SH'VAT**

**10 SH'VAT**

**11 SH'VAT**  
6:30 pm Ma'ariv service

**12 SH'VAT**  
6:00 pm Friday Night Live

**13 SH'VAT**  
9:00 am Torah Study

**14 SH'VAT**  
10:15 am Shabbat Service

**15 SH'VAT**  
Vera Williamson

**16 SH'VAT**  
Bat Mitzvah

**17 SH'VAT**  
6:30 pm Ma'ariv service

**18 SH'VAT**  
7:00 pm SFOP meeting

**19 SH'VAT**  
8:15 pm Shabbat Service

**20 SH'VAT**  
8:00 pm Sabbath Service

**21 SH'VAT**  
9:00 am Torah Study

**22 SH'VAT**  
10:15 am Shabbat Service

**23 SH'VAT**  
10:30 pm Tot Shabbat

**24 SH'VAT**  
8:00 pm Cantor Unplugged

**25 SH'VAT**  
9:00 pm Sabbath Service

**26 SH'VAT**  
10:30 pm Sabbath Service

**27 SH'VAT**  
10:30 pm Sabbath Service

**28 SH'VAT**  
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**29 SH'VAT**  
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**30 SH'VAT**  
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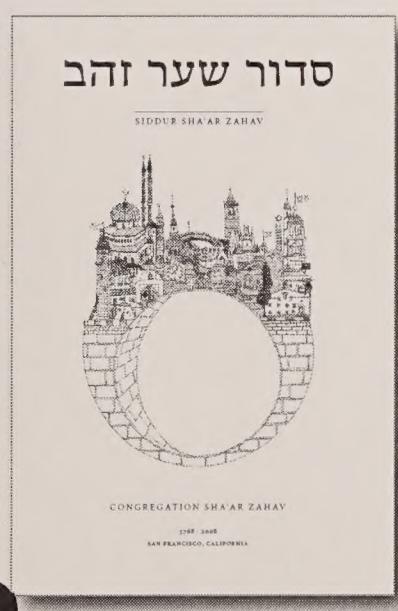
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